

OFFICIAL SELECTION 2019
sundance
film festival

OFFICIAL SELECTION
diff
2019

OFFICIAL SELECTION
hotdocs
2019
OUTSPOKEN. OUTSTANDING.

GAZZA

A film by Garry Keane and Andrew McConnell





Gaza takes us to a unique place beyond the reach of television news reports to reveal a world rich with eloquent and resilient characters, offering us a cinematic and enriching portrait of a people attempting to lead meaningful lives against the rubble of perennial conflict.

CREW

DIRECTED BY **Garry Keane & Andrew McConnell**

PRODUCERS **Brendan J. Byrne Garry Keane Andrew McConnell & Paul Cadieux**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS **Trevor Birney Christian Beetz & Maryse Rouillard**

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY **Andrew McConnell**

EDITOR **Mick Mahon**

ORIGINAL MUSIC **Ray Fabi**

DIRECTORS' INTENT

There are few places in the world that evoke such a strong visceral response as Gaza. It is somewhere that seems immediately familiar, known throughout the world from news flashes beamed onto our TV screens. Yet in truth we know almost nothing about this tiny strip of land on the shores of the Mediterranean.

From the very beginning we wanted to address the disparity between perception and reality. Having spent years working on the ground, we knew that Gaza was so much more than its portrayal in the media. This unique and vibrant land, rich in culture and history, is home to a people who are oppressed and dehumanized but who are also resilient and strong, and who want nothing more than to live normal lives.

How do you tell the story of such a place?

We thought about finding single stories, which in their telling would encapsulate the essence of what it is like to live in Gaza. But we decided that there are too many stories to tell and to take that approach would limit our ability to reflect the unique collective spirit of almost two million people, doing their best under the most extreme circumstances imaginable.

Through a cast of major and minor characters, we meet Palestinians from all walks of life, who individually have a strong story to tell but who together, create a portrait of Gaza like no other. The siege, brought on by history, Israel, Hamas and the abandonment of the international community, is the villain of our story.

This is Gaza as you have never seen it before. Far from being a place of misery, it is a land of smiles, joy and even brief moments of hope. We weave these elements with threads of despair, frustration and fatigue, allowing the audience to look deeper and ultimately to understand that life in Gaza moves in cycles, with the weight of the past bearing down on any hope for the future.

*Garry Keane &
Andrew McConnell*





CHARACTER PROFILES

Manal Khalafawi has worked as Projects Manager at UNDP for the last 25 years. She is married and has four daughters and one son. Manal's family roots are in Jerusalem but she was born and raised in Gaza. She fondly remembers a time when Gaza was a cosmopolitan place full of life and hope. Today she questions whether she was right to bring her own family into the gruelling world of Gaza and worries constantly for their safety. The youngest of Manal's children is Karma.

Karma Khaial is 19 years of age and is studying Law at Al Azhar University in Gaza. She would love to get a scholarship to do a Masters in International Law or Political science abroad but in her current circumstance, sees the likelihood of that happening to be very slim. If she cannot achieve that dream, she wants to work with humanitarian organisations in Gaza to try and help her people survive the crisis that presently exists.

Karma's passion as a young girl was Cello and she hoped to learn to play it to a professional level. However she is has been unable to even pick it up for the last few years because it reminds her too much of war and conflict.

Karma and **Ahmed Abu Alqoraan** both live by the sea but that is probably the only thing they have in common. Because even though they share the same 25 mile strip of Mediterranean coastline, their lives are poles apart.



Deir Al-Balah is Gaza's smallest refugee camp and provides shelter for 21,000 refugees who fled from villages in central and southern Palestine as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. It is located on the Mediterranean coastline, six miles due south of Karma's apartment block and is home to **Ahmed** and his 13 brothers and 23 sisters. Ahmed's father has three wives. They are the largest family in Gaza.

18 year old Ahmed is uneducated and unlike Karma, doesn't look beyond Gaza for his life goals. While Karma gazes out to sea, lamenting the unreachable opportunities that she knows lie beyond, Ahmed is looking at the three miles of restricted water and sees only a source of family income.

Ahmed's family fish to survive but barely do. His dream is to own a big boat and be the first in his family to fish on a large scale. He hopes the large crew could be made up of his band of brothers and cousins. He understands the difficulties in realizing his dream and knows that education and hard work are the only routes to success. And even though he is determined to give it a go, deep down, Ahmed knows the harsh realities of Gaza better than most.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES



GARRY KEANE

DIRECTOR & PRODUCER

In 1992, after studying film at the London College of Communication and at the Irish National Film School, he worked as a director of photography in New York and London, before finally settling in Ireland, where he has been a documentary filmmaker for the last 25 years. In that time Garry has directed over 100 hours of TV documentaries for European and American broadcasters in over 20 countries worldwide. In 2011, he set up Real Films and since then Keane's documentaries have been nominated for 11 Irish Film & Television Academy Awards; of these, his films have won four, including two in the Best Director: TV category in 2013 and 2018.

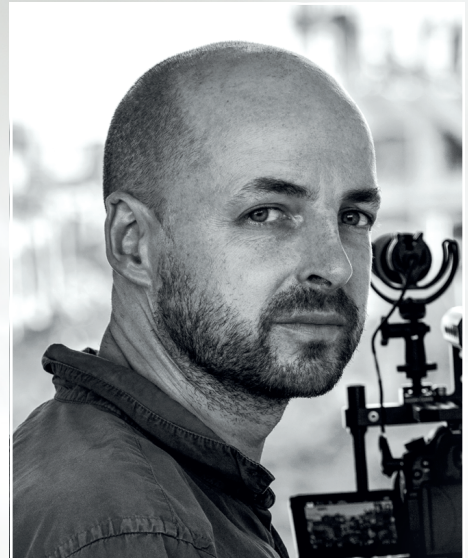
ANDREW MCCONNELL

DIRECTOR, PRODUCER &
CINEMATOGRAPHER

Andrew McConnell is an award-winning photographer who has been covering world events for over 15 years. His work often focuses on themes of conflict and displacement and has appeared in many of the world's top publications. Andrew has worked in-depth on issues such as the Syrian refugee crisis, conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the forgotten Sahrawi people of Western Sahara, for which he was awarded first place at the World Press Photo Awards.

Based in Beirut, Andrew has worked throughout the Middle East for the past 8 years. *GAZA* is his first work as a filmmaker and follows on from his photographic projects in the besieged territory that began in 2010.

Among numerous honours, Andrew has won two 1st place prizes at the World Press Photo Awards, 4 National Press Photographers Association awards, including the prestigious Best of Show, 1st place in the Pictures of the Year International and 2 Sony World Photography Awards.



BRENDAN J. BYRNE – PRODUCER

Brendan J. Byrne is currently directing a feature length documentary called *Once Upon a Time in Bulger Town*, unraveling the complicated and bloody history of South Boston (Southie) through its most famous family, the Bulgers.

His latest completed work is *Hear my Voice*, an evocative short subject documentary based on Colin Davidson's award winning exhibition of paintings entitled *Silent Testimony*, will compete for an Academy award in 2019.

Brendan's yet to be released feature documentary *One Million American Dreams* received its Irish premiere at the Galway Film Fleadh in July 2018 and tells the story of 4 families trying to reconcile themselves to the tragic stories of their loved ones who ended up in a cheap pine box in the world's largest cemetery, New York's final resting place for the unclaimed dead.

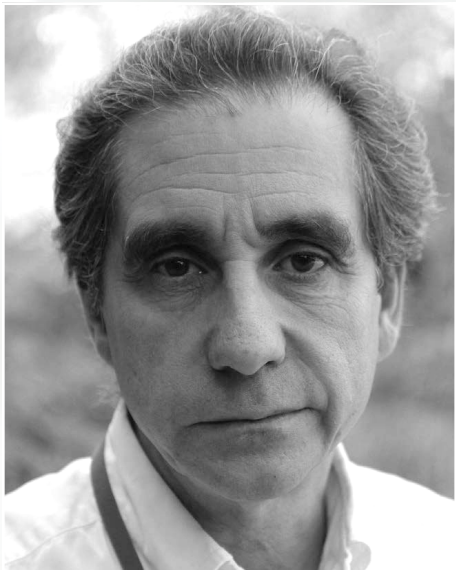
Brendan was the Executive Producer on *Elián* (CNN Films) and *No Stone Unturned* (Amazon) directed by Oscar winner Alex Gibney. Other projects which Brendan is currently producing include *Behind the Blood*, an observational study of the world's most violent city (San Pedro Sula in Honduras) as seen through the eyes of a local pastor, journalist and contract killer and *Caught in the Crossfire*, an examination of the Colombian conflict and peace process as seen through the eyes of Nobel recognized peace campaigner, Leyner Palacios.

Previously, Brendan J Byrne's most recent film as both director and producer, RTS award winning *Bobby Sands: 66 Days* became the highest grossing Irish documentary of 2016.



PAUL CADIEUX – PRODUCER

Paul Cadieux is one of Canada's leading and most active film and television producers. Among numerous awards, he has won a Genie Award for Best Motion Picture for the Oscar nominated *Les Triplettes de Belleville*. In his more than three decades as a producer, co-producer, executive producer and distributor, Paul often prefers to operate out of the limelight yet has been centrally involved in dozens of major Canadian and international projects. His more recent documentary accomplishments include: *P.S. Jerusalem* (TIFF 2016, Berlin 2017), *The Settlers* (Sundance 2017), *A Sister's Song* (DocNYC, IDFA, DocAviv, RIDM), *Gaza & Advocate* (Sundance 2019).





MICK MAHON – EDITOR

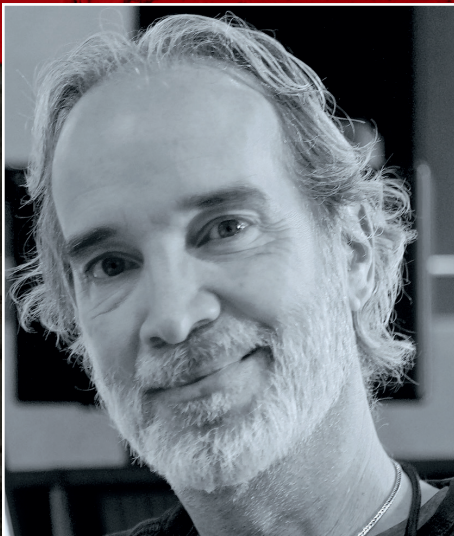
Mick Mahon is a Dublin born film editor. He graduated from the Irish National Film School with distinction in 1992, specialising in cinematography.

After graduating he switched to post-production. Mick worked as an assistant film editor throughout the 90's on many high profile feature films. Subsequently, he began to carve out a career as an editor in his own right. He has been at the forefront of documentary editing in Ireland over the last 15 years. In that time he has established long standing relationships with some of Ireland's leading filmmakers. In recent years he has branched out into drama also.

In 2015 he received an Irish Film & Television Award (IFTA) for the feature documentary, *Rough Rider* and has been nominated a further seven times. In the same year, he edited *The Queen of Ireland*, one of the highest grossing Irish documentaries of all time.

In 2018 he was editor on two of the most well reviewed features released in Ireland, *Citizen Lane*, directed by Thaddeus O'Sullivan and *I, Dolours*, directed by Maurice Sweeney.

During his career he has worked in New York, London and Berlin, as well as his native Dublin.



RAY FABI – COMPOSITEUR

Born in Canada (1963), from an Italian father and a French Canadian mother, Fabi has been composing film and TV scores for over thirty years. He is based in Old Montreal, Canada. He began his professional career as a studio musician and programmer in the 80's and amongst others, was hired by Celine Dion on her first pop album. Emmy and Gemini nominated composer, and twenty-two time Socan Awards winner, he was commissioned by Canadian government in 1998 to compose the theme song for the Winter Olympics. His clients range from PBS, New Line Cinemas, ARTe, Republic Pictures, Rubicon Pictures

and Media, Megafun, WGHB, NickelOdeon, and many others. One of his theme songs was performed by Wyclef Jean. Fabi's strength lies in his ability to capture the emotions of the film and translate them in melodies, in harmonic structures and moods. Having been in the industry as a TV composer for so many years on countless projects of all genres has contributed to Fabi's vast experience in working both with live orchestra and synthetic scores. Some of his most popular TV series are *Xcalibur*, *Are You Afraid of the Dark*, *Arthur* and *Chris Cross*.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

SHOOTING FORMAT

4K

PROJECTION FORMAT

DCP/Bluray/DVD

AVAILABLE LENGTHS

52 & 94 minutes

GENRE

Documentary

ORIGINAL VERSION

Arabic

SUB-TITLES

English & French

FORMAT

Colour 2.39

COUNTRY OF PRODUCTION

Ireland/Canada/Germany

SOUND

5.1

YEAR

2019

REAL FILMS ET FILMOPTION INTERNATIONAL EN CO-PRODUCTION AVEC FINE POINT FILMS ET GEBRUDER BEETZ FILMPRODUKTION
EN ASSOCIATION AVEC FIS ÉIREANN/SCREEN IRELAND ZDF/ARTE DANISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION SVERIGES TELEVISION



INTERNATIONAL SALES & DISTRIBUTION

FILMOPTION INTERNATIONAL

3401 rue Saint-Antoine Ouest
Westmount (QC) H3Z 1X1
+1 514-931-6180

anoble@filmoption.com
www.filmoption.com



PUBLIC RELATIONS (QUÉBEC)

IXION COMMUNICATIONS

190 avenue de l'Épée
Outremont (QC) H2V 3T2
+1 514-495-8176

judith.dubeau@ixioncommunications.com
IXIONComm

PUBLIC RELATIONS (OUTSIDE OF QUÉBEC)

GAT PR

70 rue Montclair #604
Toronto (ON) M5P 1P7
+1 416-731-3034

ingrid@gat.ca
gat.ca

